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Golden Gate Audubon Society

THE GULL



EAST BAY REGIONAL PARKS

("Toto, I Don't Think We're in Kansas Anymore.")

Our November 14th program in Berkeley will teach us that there's no place like home to explore nature. The East Bay Regional Parks are right in our own backyard. Photographer Bob Walker will present a personal travelog of the District which includes 47 parks on 70,000 acres and more than a thousand miles of trails in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

Bob Walker will present a regional view of the parks, and his slide show will focus on new shoreline trails, land management and acquisition, natural history, ecology and more. Bob is a freelance photographer and consultant to the East Bay Regional Park District. His credits include cinematographer for *Secrets of the Bay* and *Treasures of the Greenbelt*, an award winning film.

Bob will be joined by Janet Cobb, Assistant General Manager of Public Affairs for the District. Janet will speak about Open Space America, a newly formed organization to preserve open spaces. The program will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, in Berkeley.

—JOELLE BUFFA



The GULL SALUTES THE EGRET!

In a letter dated Sept. 27th,
Peter A. A. Berle, president of

National Audubon writes:

I wanted you to be one of the first to know that we are dropping the flag and featuring the egret prominently as a means of marking the Audubon name. We have heard from you and our members and our Board. Too many people don't like the flag and we, as a membership organization, are responsive to your views. You have reminded us how important the egret is as a part of our heritage. We agree and we will display it consistently. After the blue flag inventory is used up, you will see the Audubon name on our publications in conjunction with our classic egret.



(continued on page 165)

FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

Saturday, November 9—Birds of Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park.

Wednesday, November 13—Mini-trip to Aquatic Park, Berkeley.

For details on the above, see *The GULL* for October.

Saturday, November 16—Hayward Regional Shoreline. Meet at the end of West Winton Ave. in Hayward at 9 a.m. for about four hours of birding. This location is alive with shorebirds, ducks and grebes. There are also grassland species to be seen. Dress warmly and bring a scope if you have one. Lunch is optional. Leader: David George (339-0765) (✓).

Sunday, November 17—Palo Alto Baylands. Meet at 8:30 a.m. Take Hwy. 101 south to Palo Alto, exit at Embarcadero and drive east toward the yacht harbor and Baylands Refuge. After entering the Refuge meet in the parking lot on the right just before the Duck Pond. (The Duck Pond is on the left just beyond the Palo Alto Airport.) Bring lunch, scopes, and clothes for rain and mud. We should see waterfowl, rails, shorebirds, and possibly Burrowing Owls. Leader: Bob Hirt (408/446-4478). (✓)

Thursday, November 21—Seventeenth Annual Thanksgiving outing to Point Reyes National Seashore. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, Section H, or at 10 a.m. at the Point Reyes National Seashore Headquarters (one mile west of Olema). We hope to see alumni of previous years and welcome newcomers to this tradition.

We will have a leisurely day of birding and hiking. We generally see an excellent variety of waterfowl, shorebirds and landbirds. The day will end with a Thanksgiving dinner at 4:30 or 5 p.m. at the Olema Farmhouse (about \$14) in the town of Olema. **No reservations needed for trip or restaurant**, just show up with clothes for cool windy weather, a scope if you have one, and a light lunch. Leader: Barry Spitz (454-2769). (✓)

Saturday, December 7—Monterey Bay and Coastal Areas. Meet at 9 a.m. in Monterey at the foot of Coast Guard Pier. (Bring quarters for parking.) We will bird this area then drive north, stopping at various spots including Moss Landing. We will be looking for loons, grebes, gulls, and rocky coastline species. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leader: Don Starks (408/226-4134, eve.) (✓)

Wednesday, December 11—Mini-trip to Lake Merritt, Oakland. Meet at the Rotary Science Center at 9:30 a.m. Go east on Grand Ave., cross Harrison St. and turn right on Bellevue to the Rotary Science Center on the right. This is a good opportunity to review waterfowl. Lunch optional. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (351-9301) and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓). If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call **Russ Wilson**, Field Trips Committee Chmn. (524-2399).

FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

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SEPTEMBER OBSERVATIONS

It doesn't happen often and I'm really not complaining, but this month there were too many birds. I know it's a fatuous comment, ranking right up there with the one about the trouble with Mozart's operas is that they have too many notes, but it does make for a space problem here. As an indication of what the month was like, I usually end up with 10 to 12 pages of data from which to cull tidbits of interest; this time I have 25 pages—35,000 bytes as opposed to 17,000 last month. I suppose we can attribute much of nature's largesse to the weather. Peter Pyle, who keeps track of weather patterns on SE Farallon, reports that the clear, windy periods of the summer have given over to lighter NW winds with clouds and fog—cycles of 1 day of heavy fog followed by 1 to 2 days of fog clearing at 10 a.m., followed by 1 to 2 days of 3-mile visibility at dawn, all with NW winds, then 1 to 2 days of clouds, light south winds, 5 to 10 miles of visibility and major waves of landbird migrants. On the 15th, there were twenty-four species of warbler on SE Farallon, a new island record; on the 21st, a total of one hundred twelve species. Outer Pt. Reyes had a circus atmosphere on the weekends as birders raced about passing the word and finding new birds. The concept of "Warbler Neck" was laid to rest, briefly, as up to ten species of warbler and a Least Flycatcher cavorted in the lupine at the Lighthouse.

The landbird invasion was so exciting during the month that seabirds and waders pale in comparison, although their numbers are scarcely negligible. Monterey Bay pelagic trips reported huge numbers of Sooty Shearwaters, along with Pink-footed's and Buller's; a few Flesh-footed Shear-

waters early in the month (AWa, AD); flocks of Ashy and Black Storm-Petrels from mid-month on; Wilson's Storm-Petrel on the 6th and 15th (DLSh, MLE); moderate numbers of all three Jaegers and South Polar Skua; huge feeding flocks of Arctic Terns on the 9th with many seen again on the 21st (AD); regular sightings of Xantus' Murrelet; two Craveri's Murrelets on the 7th (AWa); and a **Horned Puffin**, seen well on the 3rd by 3 boatloads of birders in Monterey for the ABA Conference.

On the 21st, a **Black Swan**, a common resident of Australia but known only in zoo-type areas around here, appeared off of SE Farallon. For two days it hung around off the island coming ashore to sleep and eat bread out of the hands of the residents. Two birds were taken from the SF Arboretum earlier this summer and perhaps this was one of them, but it did not hang around long enough for anyone to confirm this, departing on the afternoon of the 21st. It was the first Black Swan record for SE Farallon.

A Tufted Duck spent the summer at the Hayward Regional Shoreline (RJR); the King Eider remained at Moss Landing until the 6th; a Harlequin Duck and Oldsquaw were seen in Drake's Bay at the end of September (mob).

The hawkwatch at Hill 129 in the Marin Headlands got off to a slow start this year (we've had a very foggy summer), but by the end of September the count of Broad-winged Hawks was nearing 150—a new record (CLF).

The shorebird scene was enlivened considerably by several sizeable waves of migrants—Pectoral Sandpipers, for instance, were seen in record numbers from the Farallones to outer Pt. Reyes to the South Bay where up to 175 were reported at one time at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station (SBT, PJM). A

Hudsonian Godwit was reported from Humboldt County from the 9th to the 21st (JCS, BY); the **Bar-tailed Godwit** remained along the Berkeley/Albany shoreline through the 22nd. Quite an early **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** was reported from Humboldt County on the 9th and 10th (JCSA)—these Asian strays generally don't show up until the latter part of September. Additional individuals were reported from Princeton on the 22nd (RSTh) and Arcata on the 26th (fide BY). The Stilt Sandpiper remained in Tracy until the 7th (DGY); another was found at the Salinas Sewer Ponds on August 31 (PLN). Up to three Buff-breasted Sandpipers were in San Jose thru the 14th; up to two more were at Pt. Reyes thru the 12th (mob). As many as four Ruffs were seen at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station between the 14th and the 27th (mob).

Black-chinned Hummingbirds continued to show up at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station—a high of fourteen included four males (PJM); another individual was seen in San Francisco on the 21st (SFB).

A Red-naped Sapsucker was seen in Lee Vining on the 1st (PJM). Eighteen Willow Flycatchers, low numbers considering the weather, were reported from SE Farallon including a possible Alder Flycatcher on August 21, judged to be that by plumage and measurements (PP). The Least Flycatcher at the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse on the 15th obligingly hung about with a Pacific-slope Flycatcher down in the lupine, giving wonderful views and comparisons. Additional individuals were reported from Pt. Reyes on the 8th and the 29th (RS, JM, JMcK) and from Coyote Creek on the 18th (SBT).

A **Yellow Wagtail** on the 21st was a first for SE Farallon (PP). As the *Chronicle* reported, there was an invasion of **Red-throated Pipits** in late

September—one at Pt. Reyes (JLD), two on SE Farallon (PP), six at Bolinas (KH, JMcC, SNGH), two at Hayward (RJR, ShH) and one at Pigeon Pt. (RSTh). They provide one of the more frustrating birding experiences as they call unmistakably flying overhead, but then land in tall grass and bushes where they are nearly impossible to see. The flock of **Long-billed Dowagers**, also reported by the *Chronicle*, was never confirmed.

A White-eyed Vireo was seen in Golden Gate Park on the 17th (ASH). Red-eyed Vireos were seen in Bodega Bay on the 7th (DHo, DN) and Golden Gate Park on the 16th and 17th (ASH).

The warbler list is quite wondrous:

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER

1	9/21	San Francisco	SFB, JM
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TENNESSEE WARBLER

1	9/3	Half Moon Bay	TE
3	9/10-21	SE Farallon	PP
1	9/12	Pt. Reyes	RL
1	9/21	San Francisco	fide ASH
1,1	9/23,26	Princeton	TE, JRi
1	9/26	Bodega Bay	DN

NASHVILLE WARBLER

1	8/28	Bolinas	KH
1	9/10	Pt. Reyes	KH

VIRGINIA'S WARBLER

1	9/26	SE Farallon	PP
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NORTHERN PARULA

1	9/3	Ano Nuevo	TE
1	9/7	Carmel Valley	RS

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER

1	9/3	Princeton	TE
11 total	9/4-23	SE Farallon	PP
4 total	9/7-22	Pt. Reyes	AME, BDP, RLe, JM, KH, RS, KA
5 total	9/7-24	Bodega Bay	DN, CW, MH, JCS, DHo
1,1	9/15-20, 21	San Francisco	DPM, JMc, SMO, JM, PJM
1,2	9/16, 24-25	San Mateo Coast	RSTh, BS, JM
1	9/19	Rodeo Lagoon	KGH, SGI

MAGNOLIA WARBLER

1	9/5	Bolinas	KH
6 total	9/7-21	SE Farallon	PP
1	9/7	Pt. Reyes	BDP
1	9/14-15	San Mateo Coast	RSTh

CAPE MAY WARBLER

2 total 9/9-24 Pt. Reyes mob
2 total 9/12-23 SE Farallon PP
1 9/20 Humboldt fide BY

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER

3 total 9/4-21 SE Farallon PP
2 total 9/15-16, 22 Pt. Reyes RS,JM,BDP
1 9/18-19 Bodega Bay DN

HERMIT WARBLER

1 9/7-9 Pt. Reyes BDP,JM,DL

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER

1 8/29 San Mateo Coast BS fide RSTh
1 9/21 Pt. Reyes DL

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER

7 total 9/7-15 Pt. Reyes BDP,JMcC, AME,EDG, AWa,JM,GFi, RS,RL
4 total 9/7-22 SE Farallon PP
1 9/20 San Francisco JM
1 9/24 San Mateo Coast BS fide RSTh

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER

1 9/10-16 Pt. Reyes FGB,RS,JM

PRAIRIE WARBLER

4 total 9/9-23 SE Farallon PP
3 total 9/11-21 San Francisco DZ,CBe, SMo,JM,SFB
1,1 9/19,23 San Mateo Coast RSTh,TE
1 9/23-24 Pt. Reyes DL,MJL,JM

PALM WARBLER

7 total 9/15-29 Pt. Reyes DL,MJL,JLD, BiL,JEP,TE
1,1 9/17,21 San Mateo Coast RSTh,JCS
1 9/21 San Francisco JMMc
5 9/12-23 SE Farallon PP

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER

1 9/12 Pt. Reyes RL
3 9/14-19 SF Farallon PP

BLACKPOLL WARBLER

15 total 9/5-29 Bolinas, Pt. Reyes mob
29 9/6-23 SE Farallon PP
3 total 9/10-29 San Mateo Coast RSTh,BS
1 9/16 Coyote Hills RJR
1,1 9/19-23, 20 Bodega Bay DN,AWg
1 9/22-25 San Francisco JiD,JM

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER

1,1 9/3-22, 20-25 San Mateo Coast TE,RC,RSTh
1,1 9/7,20 Bodega Bay DHo,DN
6 total 9/11-29 Pt. Reyes mob
1 9/29 Carmel River DR

AMERICAN REDSTART

1 9/1 Mono County PJM
3 total 9/2-26 San Francisco ASH,LLu, SMo,MNo
20 total 9/6-23 SE Farallon PP
12 total 9/7-25 Marin County mob
3 total 9/7-16 San Mateo Coast JMcK,RSTh, CBe

4 total 9/8-26 Bodega Bay DN,MH
1 9/10 Humboldt JCS
1 9/26 Santa Clara County PJM

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER

1,1 9/17, 28-30 Pt. Reyes BC,Bil,mob
1 9/29 Carmel River DR

OVENBIRD

1,1 9/7-9,15 SE Farallon PP
3 total 9/14-23 Pt. Reyes DHo,RS, MJL,DL

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH

4 total 9/7-23 Pt. Reyes AME,BDP,JM MSt,BYo,DES RMS
1 9/7 Bodega Bay DN
1,1 9/10-11,15 SE Farallon PP
1 9/10-13 Carmel River MiF
1 9/25-28 San Mateo Coast RSTh,CaL,JM

KENTUCKY WARBLER

1 9/15 SE Farallon PP

CONNECTICUT WARBLER

3 total 9/7-15 SE Farallon PP
1 9/25 Santa Clara County JMS,SBT

MOURNING WARBLER

3 total 9/7-21 SE Farallon PP
1 9/14-16 Pt. Reyes DSg,JM,RS

HOODED WARBLER

1,1 9/11,18 Pt. Reyes KSt,RS
1 9/23-26 Bodega Bay DN,JCS, MLR,BDP
1 9/25 San Mateo Coast JM

CANADA WARBLER

1 9/15 Pt. Reyes LJP,SNHG

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT

1 9/21 Redwood Shores, San Mateo BS fide RSTh
1 9/24 Pt. Reyes RS

Summer Tanagers and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings showed up in moderate numbers throughout the month. A Painted Bunting was on SE Farallon on the 15th (PP). Dickcissel individuals were seen in Hayward on the 20th (RJR); SE Farallon on the 21st; and Pt. Reyes on the 22nd (SBT). Clay-colored and Brewer's Sparrows and Bobolinks passed through in good numbers; a few Yellow-headed Blackbirds showed up in out-of-the-ordinary spots; and Orchard Orioles in Pacific Grove from the 10th to the 15th (MiF) and Bolinas on the 14th and 15th (KH,RS) were noteworthy. So was a Lawrence's Goldfinch in Bolinas on Aug. 28th (DaS fide KH).

OBSERVERS: Ken Ackerman, Stephen F. Bailey, Christopher Benesh, Florence G. Bennett, Rob Calwell, Bill Chilson, Ann Dewart, Jon L. Dunn, Todd Easterla, Alan M. Eisner, Michael L. Ezekial, Carter L. Faust, Mike Feighner, Marc Fenner, George Finger, Steve Glover, Edward G. Greaves, Keith Hansen, Shawn Hayes, M. Heffernon, Kevin G. Hintsa, Bob Hirt, David Hoffman, Alan S. Hopkins, Stephen N. G. Howell, Rick Lebadour, Dave Lee, Bill Lenarz, Les Lieurance, Ron Lindeman, Michael J. Lippmeyer, Calvin Lou, John McCormick, John McKean, Peter J. Metropulos, Joe Morlan, Scott Morrical, Dan P. Murphy, Dan Nelson, Paul L. Noble, Mary Nordstrom, Benjamin D. Parmeter, John E. Parmeter, Lina J. Prairie, J. Ri, Robert J. Richmond, Don Roberson, Mary Louise Rosegay, Barry Sauppe, Donald E. Schmoldt, Debra L. Shearwater, David A. Sibley, Mike Stake, Rich Stallcup, Ken Stechler, John C. Sterling, Robert M. Stewart, Scott B. Terrell, Ron S. Thorn, Adrian Wander, Alan Wight, Chris Wood, Bruce Youngberg, Bob Yutzy, Debby Zito.

—ANN DEWART

**Never doubt that
a small group of
thoughtful,
committed citizens
can change the
world; indeed,
it's the only thing
that ever does.**

— Margaret Mead



ELSIE ROEMER LEAVES US

Saturday, October 5th, while sitting at her work table and reading a birding magazine, Elsie Romer quietly died. This November she would have been 99 years old.

Elsie was, among many other things, a birder, an organizer, a teacher, a collector of data and a stalwart conservationist. She was not particularly interested in rare or vagrant birds. Her focus was on those birds who relied on the wetlands along the Alameda and Oakland shorelines, familiar birds to her. She had a strong affection for San Leandro Bay and worked, unsuccessfully, to prevent the filling of the "distribution center," a part of which is now having to be restored due to GGAS litigation. If they had only listened to Elsie. She also worked to stop the extension of the Alameda dump which would fill in yet more of San Leandro Bay. A constant reminder of her success here is the levee (which would have been filled with garbage) diking off a part of San Leandro Bay, forming a favorite birding spot. Doolittle Pond.

She prepared a bird list for San Leandro Bay and saw to it that the plans for the San Leandro Bay Shoreline Park included plenty of emphasis on bird habitat. She prepared the section on birds for the East Bay Regional Park District's Guidelines for San Leandro Bay in 1972. She organized bird counts along the marshes of Alameda beginning in the sixties, first for California Fish and Game, and then independently, providing for the records two full decades of twice monthly counts. Many fine birders participated in her counts and afterward joined her at her worktable to eat bag lunches, share her home-baked treats for dessert, all the while compiling birds and numbers neatly into her handwritten notebooks.

Her records of Clapper Rail numbers

have been extremely valuable to document the gradual losses in the Alameda/Oakland marshes which apparently extrapolates to the entire Bay Area. Elsie and Junea Kelley were the first to report (1963 unpublished records) Least Terns in the Alameda/Oakland area since 1923 (Grinnell and Miller, 1944)! Her persistent reporting to California Fish and Game of Least Terns here is the likely reason that the Least Tern population in northern California survives.

We must remember her love of young people too. She taught at Alameda High School. She also welcomed interested youngsters to join in with her bird counts. Some of these grew up to be professional biologists. She led many field trips in Alameda for GGAS and the Sierra Club. GGAS created the Elsie Roemer Conservation Award in 1972. It continues to be awarded annually to individuals making remarkable conservation contributions.

In the late seventies some Alamedans complained that the marsh at the south end of Alameda's beach was responsible for the hydrogen sulfide smell in late summers due to the entrapment of rotting sea lettuce among the cord grass. Some proposed removing the cord grass! Elsie was very upset about the negative attention to this valuable bird habitat. Without telling her, the count group decided to request that the East Bay Regional Park District declare the shoreline between Park and Broadway a bird sanctuary. It would be a wonderful tribute to Elsie in her 86th year to have it named for her. On February 6, 1979 the EBRPD board, with full support of the Alameda City Council, voted to create a bird sanctuary in Alameda and name it in her honor. No one could deny this woman of lifetime service her deserved recognition, no matter how

they felt about the marshes and the smelly problems. It seemed especially fitting that Howard Cogswell, then and EBRPD board member, made the motion.

Elsie worked tenaciously with grace, diplomacy and the kind of intelligence that was difficult for even her adversaries to ignore. Her work reminds us that the struggle to preserve wetlands is not new, and long term data collection provides the documentation that reveals the negative consequences of poor resource management.

She requested that there be no services in her memory. When asked a few months ago why she chose to donate her body to science, she smiled and answered, "I want to be useful for as long as I can be."

—LEORA FEENEY

NESTING WRENS ON THE DEFENSE

July 28, on vacation in Mt. Lassen National Forest, my wife and I saw an unusual defense of the nest of a common House Wren. Visiting Dusty camp on Lake Britton not far from Burney, we sat under a big fir tree overlooking the lake. In front of us across a dusty one-lane camp road, was a deciduous tree with a peculiar double branch growing out side by side and immediately curving upwards so as to cross over about a foot upwards. These branches, flat against the trunk, formed a cavity that had been used by a pair of house wrens to make their nest. A few small twigs stuck out of the cavity at the bottom. After adjusting our sight to the dim light of the shade, we watched the parents bring food to the little ones. The nestlings cheeped a lot and when a parent arrived, their scraggly necks stretched up to reveal their funny gaping mouths.

Shortly, one of the adults began to show fluttering of wings at another tree trunk and we saw a nuthatch erratically climbing up the tree, hassled by the little wren. Meanwhile the other parent kept up the delivery of more insect food. Then suddenly the defender began a maneuver that left us flabbergasted. It left off hassling the nuthatch, came to the nest, and carefully placing a foot on each side of the entrance began to spread its wings and tail so as to cover almost completely the elongated entrance. It held this position for a few moments, dropped down and returned to hassling the nuthatch. A minute or two later it returned to the nest and performed the covering operation again.

I went to get my camera but when I returned I realized that there was too little light and I had left my flash at home. Lacking the light, I took out a piece of paper and the next time the wren performed, I began to put down in detail all that I had seen. As I write now, I recall that old saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words." But I hope these words are a good second best to record such an unusual defense of a nest.

All of the foregoing reminds me of another incident that involved house wrens; their nest and an intruder titmouse. That time we were in the canyon at Sunol Regional Park, upstream from the central campground along the river. The nesting cavity was in an "elbow," a branch of a sycamore tree where the branch had broken off and a second branch had sprouted up vertically. We spied the nest because the parent birds were hard at work bringing twigs to take into the nest.

In an interval between visits I noticed a titmouse furtively look over the hole and then slip in and come out with a twig in its beak. Suddenly one of the

wrens returned with another twig and in the chase both twigs were dropped and the titmouse left the area. The second wren returned and both entered the nest. We could neither hear nor see anything of what went on, only imagine their concern at the invasion. Finally both left the area and in a short time the titmouse returned and this time managed to elude the returning wren and took the twig away.

This 'steal the twig' game went on for quite a while, but we never were able to see who won nor even figure out whether the twigs the wrens brought in were being robbed first from the titmouse who would then try to steal them back, or whether the robbery was initiated by the titmouse.

In the first incident, of the nest defense, our sympathies were all with the wrens, but in the contest with the titmouse, we left a bit ambivalent. In that situation it was easy to dislike the latter bird and we hoped that the titmouse was the aggressor.

—DONALD D. DOD

CAN YOU HELP?

The chapter office often receives requests from out-of-town visitors for names of local birders who would be willing to spend time birding with them. Sometimes the request has a long lead time and other times it's more immediate.

Currently the office does not have a list of members who would be willing to do this. If being a birding ambassador to visiting birder sounds interesting to you, please call the office, 843-2222, and we will begin a referral list.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY



AS THE FLAG COMES DOWN

(continued from page 157)

I hope that the debate over the flag has not distracted us from our true goal: to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat. That mission can be accomplished only by dealing directly with the threats to habitat. I disagree strongly with the claim made in a few articles published recently about Audubon that Audubon is shifting its focus from wildlife to more human-centered issues. These writers fail to understand that we cannot save wildlife habitat unless we also deal directly with the human causes of habitat destruction.

The need to think and act with broad vision was well expressed recently by Paul Hughes, president of the Virginia Audubon Council. He wrote to an editor who had criticized Audubon for getting into "nonwildlife issues." Paul wrote, "I wish we all had the luxury merely to enjoy the natural world, but unfortunately even the most casual observer of our natural environment realizes a gamut of ecological insults continues to degrade our planet at a pace that can wreak global disaster during our, but certainly our children's, lifetime. . . . Our environment can't wait for. . . naturalists to act upon the 'canary in the cage' warnings many of the rest of us of the Audubon Society's members have already heard."

At our recent Board meeting, the Directors passed a resolution, which I heartily endorse, reaffirming our commitment to protecting birds and other wildlife and wildlife habitat. If you read or hear questions about Audubon's commitment to its roots join me in emphasizing that it is as strong as ever.

In a bewilderingly complex world bent on environmental degradation, our challenge is to identify and pursue basic solutions that will really achieve the environmental protection we all seek. This includes educating the public about the results of population pressures on the natural world, lobbying for water quality, wetlands protection and safe management and minimization of wastes—as well as working for sound wildlife management and public acquisition of certain critical lands.

The year ahead will be an exciting one at the national level, with the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act/wetlands protection all under serious attack in the Congress. These are our top national priorities, and they attest to our continued commitment to protection of wildlife.

Thanks for your ongoing staunch support and good work.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM "THE STATE OF THE ESTUARY" CONFERENCE

The State of the Estuary Conference, held May 30, 31, and June 1, 1991, brought together over 500 scientists, policy-makers, environmentalists and members of the public to discuss the major environmental threats to the Estuary and actions needed to restore its health.

Dr. J.R. Schubel from the Marine Sciences Research Center in New York provided data showing Americans use more water per person than any people on earth, and Californians use more than most Americans. He related the high use of water in the state plus water diversions to the Estuary's problems. Low flows from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers contribute to a decrease in fish and wildlife populations.

Marine biologist Samuel N. Luoma, chief of the USGS Water Resources Division in Menlo Park, presented data showing high levels of toxic metals, including chromium, cadmium, copper, nickel, and selenium, in clams living in Suisun Bay.

Perry Herrgesell, a Fish and Wildlife Manager for the California Department of Fish and Game at the Bay/Delta Project in Stockton said "The trend is downhill for almost everything in the Bay." This spring, striped bass, starry flounder, and Delta smelt were at the lowest populations in years. Phytoplankton and zooplankton, microscopic plants and animals found at the base of the food chain, are also in decline.

Mike Monroe, Technical Program Manager for the San Francisco Estuary Project, presenting the *State of the Estuary Report*, echoed the same concern about the decline of chinook salmon, striped bass, Delta smelt and other species. He presented highlights

from the 150-page report which will be released later this summer.

Retired Justice John Racanelli gave a provocative, personal assessment of the State Water Resources Control Board's application of the Racanelli decision, which in 1986 overturned Bay/Delta water standards set by the SWRCB. Failure to fulfill its "public trust" responsibilities and adopt new water quality standards in a timely fashion was particularly distressing, given declining fish populations which could prove fatal to some species.

Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) is introducing legislation which will enable the San Francisco Estuary Project to continue its work and to be eligible for federal funding to implement the Plan. An office will be established to conduct research and will report to Congress on its progress. For more information about these efforts, contact Amy Zimpfer at 415/744-1952 or Joan Patton at 415/653-5723.

Jean Auer, SFEP consultant, reported on new legislation, the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (SB484), introduced by U.S. Senator Bill Bradley (D-NJ). It calls for comprehensive reform of the federally financed Central Valley Project with authorization of fish and wildlife as a purpose of the project. This bill also provides important new water management authorities to encourage conservation and provide drought assistance.

Lt. Governor Leo McCarthy released a 208-page State Lands Commission report on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta at the conference and announced that the Commission would hold two public hearings this summer leading to the development of a comprehensive Delta management plan.

(Thanks to the
San Francisco Estuary Project)



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA BOOK FESTIVAL GLOOM AND DOOM

Is too much "gloom and doom" harmful to the earth?

Leading environmental authors David Brower, Charlene Spretnak, Jerry Mander and Harold Gilliam will gather for a panel discussion on the pros and cons of negative or alarmist viewpoints in environmental/ecological writing at the second annual San Francisco Bay Area Book Festival on Saturday, Nov. 2 at 3 p.m.

San Francisco Chronicle environmental columnist Harold Gilliam will moderate the panel discussion on whether a more positive approach is needed to activate people in repairing the environment. And what might that approach be?

The Book Fest is the weekend of Nov. 2-3 at the Concourse Exhibition Center, 638 Brannan at Eighth in San Francisco. Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. both days, and admission is free.

Designed to promote literacy and to celebrate the Bay Area's dynamic book community, the Festival offers 175 bookseller and publisher booths; readings and book signings by prominent local and national authors; panel discussions on environmental issues,

censorship, mystery writing, science fiction, travel and gay/lesbian issues, a hands-on display of bookmaking arts; master cooking classes; story-telling and childrens' activities; and an opportunity for holiday shopping.

Highlights include readings by Amy Tan and Paule Marshall, and workshops for writers and editors.

David Brower is chairman of Earth Island Institute and author of the new book *Work in Progress* (Gibb-Smith Publishers). Charlene Spretnak, a well-known ecofeminist, is author of the new *States of Grace* (Harper-San Francisco). And Jerry Mander's new book, *In the Absence of the Sacred*, will appear in early November from Sierra Club Books.

For information on the Book Festival call (415) 861-BOOK.

AUDUBON'S TEN TOP TIPS FOR SAVING THE PLANET



LEARN ABOUT HOUSEHOLD POISONS: Avoid purchasing pesticides, solvents and household cleaners containing toxic chemicals. When you must use them, buy only what you need and use them up. Urge your local government to set up drop-off points for household hazardous wastes.

ASILOMAR IN APRIL

An early reminder: It's Asilomar Year again and the Audubon gathering will take place the week before Easter as usual. Watch *The GULL* for further details.

PRESIDENT BERLE IN BAY AREA

Tuesday, Oct. 8, twenty-five Bay Area Audubon chapter leaders met with Peter A. A. Berle and Glenn Olson, Western Regional Vice-President, at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary. It was one of those mild, spectacularly lovely evenings and the patio setting was comfortable. Peter expressed his grave concern over the "Wetlands Handbook" and the lack of scientific basis for the onslaught President Bush has unleashed against wetlands. He urged that letters and phone calls to Congress and the President continue. He was upbeat and assured about the health and vigor of National Audubon, and complimentary about local activism and chapter strength.

He announced that the board had decided that the 1992 convention would be scheduled for Washington, D.C., in the month of June.

"My position on wetlands is straightforward: all existing wetlands, no matter how small, should be preserved."

**George Bush
October 1988**

Sports Afield Magazine

Please remind him!

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

The holiday season will be upon us very soon and this year we have gift certificates for bird seed redeemable at our Winter Seed Sale (late January), or for any feeders, books and paraphernalia we sell at the office. The birds will be as grateful as your hard-to-please relative or friend!

AUDUBON BIRD CALENDARS

AUDUBON Bird Calendars are sometimes difficult to find, but the GGAS office expects to have them for sale as early as November. We also plan to have available the AUDUBON Engagement Calendar at that time. Call to be sure they have arrived before you make a trip to the office (843-2222).

DESPARATELY SEEKING COOKIE CHAIRMAN

Once again we are coming to our membership to find either an individual, or even better, a committee to perform hosting duties at our general meetings. Our volunteers in both San Francisco and Berkeley have either moved, or moved on, so that we face a refreshment gap at our meetings. We have been very fortunate the last few years to have had Penny Watson in San Francisco and Caroline Bly in Berkeley providing welcoming smiles as well as goodies and drinks for us.

The commitment in San Francisco is for three or four meetings a year; in Berkeley, four or five meetings. We urge you to volunteer for this very important job by calling the office, 843-2222.

THREE-WAY LAND SWAP

A three-party land trade in the Livermore-San Ramon Valley between the East Bay Regional Park District, Alameda County and the U.S. Army was approved August 6 by Park District directors.

By terms of the agreement, 445 acres of Tassajara Creek Regional Park in Dublin will be transferred from the Park District to Army ownership. The land adjoins Camp Parks Reserve Forces Training Area. When the Army no longer needs it for military purposes, it will revert back to the Park District.

The Army also has agreed that no public roads will be built through the 445 acres without prior District approval.

The District will retain a 25-acre easement at Tassajara for public hiking, bicycling and equestrian use. A section of regional trail will be developed and maintained by the District along this easement, which is a riparian corridor.

The second part of the land transfer involves the Arroyo property, a 121-acre parcel owned by Alameda County. Located just north of the District's Del Valle Regional Park near Livermore, the parcel will be transferred to the District.

Finally, a 47-acre portion of Camp Parks, now owned by the Army, will be transferred to Alameda County for potential use as a BART station and road extension.

The property transfers are authorized under the Defense Authorization Bill, passed by Congress in 1988 through the efforts of California Congressional and Senate delegations. Negotiations for the transfer begun at that time have been concluded with resolution of complex issues of public use, defense needs and future reversion back to parkland.

"I'm happy to see this agreement completed," said Rep. Pete Stark of Hayward, who played a leading role in the negotiations. "I look forward to seeing the Camp Parks property put to public use by the local communities. I hope the citizens of Alameda County enjoy the benefit of this agreement for generations to come."

The Arroyo property includes old buildings that were once part of a tuberculosis sanitarium. The transfer agreement provides that Alameda County will clean up asbestos at the site within a five-year period. Many of the remaining buildings have deteriorated and likely will have to be demolished. As part of its standard planning process, the Park District will complete a land-use study of the site to determine how it will be developed as a park.

"This was a complicated series of negotiations between the County, Army and Park District," said James Duncan, president of the Park District Board of Directors. "The benefits to all are quite significant. We are happy to do our part in this agreement, and glad to have the reversionary clause so that the Camp Parks property reverts to parkland when the Army no longer needs it."

With the Park District board action, the transfer agreement awaits final approval by Alameda County and the Army.

—NED MacKAY

AUDUBON TV UNDER ATTACK

AGAIN. Your help is needed right away to rally in defense of our television specials. Audubon is under attack for putting before the public a special that portrays a highly controversial subject—the grazing of cattle on public land.

You will recall that we lost Stroh Brewery's sponsorship due in part to controversy over our film *Rage Over Trees* depicting the destruction of our last ancient forests. Now, our show, *The New Range Wars* about the devastation of our public lands in the West by overgrazing, has displeased the National Cattlemen's Association. Even though the show portrays the ranchers' perspective as well as that of environmentalists, the cattle lobby and the National Inholders' Association lobby have launched an all-out campaign to try to persuade GE to drop its underwriting of Audubon television. They are seeking boycotts of GE products and deluging the company with mail.

It is urgent that GE hear from the other side—from thousands of Americans who care enough about our message to write or call GE in support

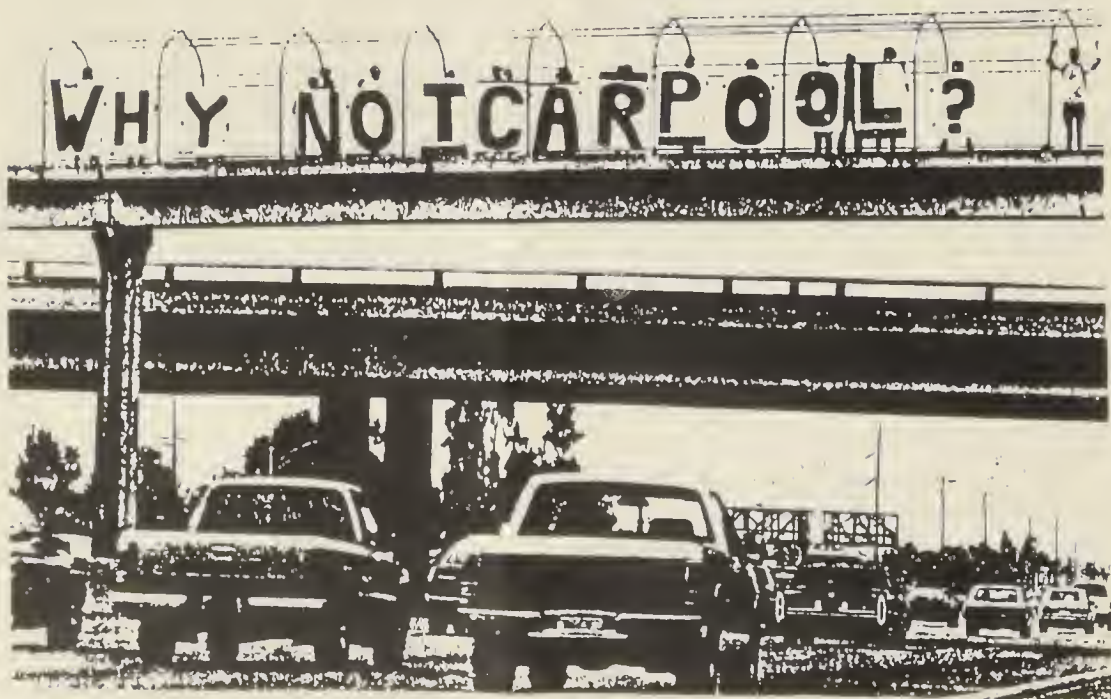
of Audubon television. Please send a letter to GE as a private citizen at the following address or call them at (203) 373-2971. Praise GE for underwriting TV Specials and request that they continue to do so. Every TV show we produce reaches 20 million Americans with a powerful environmental message. We need your help to continue these messages!

Here's where to write: Mr. Jack Welch, Chairman of the Board, 3135 Easton Turnpike, Fairfield, CT 06431.

—PETER A. A. BERLE

MISSING THIS MONTH, BACK NEXT

Meg Pauletich's Back Yark Birder and Dan Murphy's News from Our Ranch are missing this month, but will return with our December issue.



Thanks to BAY AREA ACTION, Palo Alto

HIPPODAMIA CONVERGENS

The Oct. 7, 1991 issue of *The New Yorker*, p. 103, has a "Reporter at Large" devoted to the Ladybug business. Written by Sue Hubbell, it describes a trip into the Sierra with a bug-catcher, a supplier for a Sacramento-based distributor of Ladybugs to nurseries and garden supply outlets. It turns out that releasing Ladybugs in your garden is nothing more than a feel-good, pious gesture in the direction of ecological responsibility.

The suppliers are careful not to make claims for their product's efficacy for good reason. Not scientists, the people in the business are gratifying a wish of a public that wants to avoid insecticides. Anyone who has tried releasing Ladybugs in his garden knows that they are off in a flash. What only the entomologists seem to have known is that this is expected behavior of the critters.

Equally interesting, there is some danger in the depredations of the bug-catchers who harvest perhaps fifty

percent of the population. The result may be destructive of a natural cycle of aphid predation by the *Hippodamia convergens*.

NEXT SEED SALE

GGAS will schedule its next seed sale for late January. Meanwhile, there is seed available at the office. Please call to be sure we have in stock what you need.

OAKLAND'S LAKE MERRITT

The Rotary Nature Center offers interesting activities centered around Lake Merritt. You may call them at (510) 273-3739 for information on current offerings.

For Sunday, Nov. 16 at 10:30 there is to be a "Bird Viewing on the Lake" with binoculars and brochures available, and naturalist guidance aboard a covered launch. The cost is \$1.50 per person. Board the launch at the sailboat house dock.

GIFTS and BEQUESTS

FOR GGAS
In Memory of
Elsie Roemer

WETLANDS EFFORT

FOR AUDUBON ADVENTURES

FOR BAY DELTA LAWSUIT

Gift of

Mrs. Thaire H. Adamson
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Robert and Esther Oswalt
Ann B. Witman

Luanne Gilbert

Marc Ordman

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.



Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc.

Office: (510) 843-2222

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Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$10 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

**The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917,
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.**

The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.